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ABSTRACT

For the 1968-69 school year, the School of Divinity at Metropolitan College of the St. Louis University initiated a systematic continuing education program for priests consisting of four courses: Current Moral Problems; Modern Priestly Spirituality; Institutionalism and Conscience; and Liturgical Celebration. In autumn 30 priests provided 35 registrations. Eleven of these enrolled in the spring along with another 30 for a total of 41 priests and 44 registrations. The majority of the priests (73%) were parish priests, the remainder were diocesan officials, seminary or academy teachers, hospital chaplains, etc. The most popular course was Institutionalism and Conscience--indicating local clergy confidence in the University's School of Divinity as an important intellectual resource in the fulfillment of religious duties. No strong correlation appeared between status, location, age, and course choice or number of registrations. On the basis of the limited analysis the School of Divinity has laid a foundation for a successful continuing education program. (PT)

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SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

METROPOLITAN COLLEGE

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PRIESTS:

THE FIRST YEAR, 1968-69

By *Leonard S. Stein*, Dean, Metropolitan College

Summary

For 1968-69, the School of Divinity initiated a systematic continuing education program for priests, offering four different courses. In the Autumn, 30 priests provided 35 registrations; of those 30, eleven enrolled also in the Spring, along with another 30, for a total of 41 priests and 44 registrations--a healthy growth in interest. The total 60 men thus produced 79 course registrations.

The overwhelming majority (73%) were parish priests, the group for whom the program was intended--half pastors, half associate pastors; the remainder were diocesan officials, seminary or academy teachers, hospital chaplains, etc. Median age was 45 years; mean age was 43.3; ages ranged from 27 to 64. By age decades, the largest concentration--about a third--was between 40 and 49. The priests came from parishes all over the St. Louis Archdiocese, as well as from the East Side; one man drove from Springfield, Ill.

In terms of multiple registrations, *pastors* exhibited the greatest interest: Of the 13 who enrolled for two or more courses, 46% were parish pastors, as compared with only 37% in the whole group. The single most popular course combination was INSTITUTIONALISM & CONSCIENCE and MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY, with nine men taking both; here, the proportion of pastors rose to 67% (six of the nine).

No other correlations appear among courses with respect to age, location, or status.

The growth from Autumn to Spring in both numbers of men involved and in course registrations suggests a successful first-year program. In this connection, it should be noted that the fee per course was increased (from $30.00 to $32.50) from Autumn to Spring, to cover the cost of coffee--with apparently no adverse effect on registrations.

Notable, too, is the men's choice of courses: most popular was INSTITUTIONALISM AND CONSCIENCE (25) followed closely by CURRENT MORAL PROBLEMS (24) and MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY (20). Least popular was LITURGICAL CELEBRATION (10). This suggests that the local clergy sees the University's School of Divinity as an important *intellectual* resource in the fulfillment of their religious duties.

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Introduction

In the Spring of 1968, Rev. *Gerald F. Van Acheren*, S.J., Dean of the School of Divinity, initiated the planning to establish a continuing education program for diocesan priests of the St. Louis Archdiocese. One reason for the School's move from Kansas to St. Louis was the desire by the Dean and faculty for closer dialogue with the practicing priesthood in an urban setting; a formal continuing education program seemed one ideal way to conduct that dialogue, and within the University's intellectual framework.

This brief report offers an analysis of basic registration information, as well as pertinent background information.

Background: Organizational Plans

Planning began through Fr. Van Ackeren's regular meetings with the Archdiocesan Commission on Clergy Conferences, and that group's ideas were reflected to a considerable extent in the program offered. E.g., that body suggested that courses be offered in the afternoons; the one course scheduled for the *evening*, as a test of the advice provided, failed to attract sufficient reigstrations.

The second planning stage was to consult with the School of Divinity faculty, and to decide that all courses should be taught by them. Faculty involved in this first year's activity were:

John R. Connery, S.J., LL. B., A.M., S.T.D., Professor of Moral Theology.
Everett A. Diederich, S.J., S.M., S.T.D., Associate Professor of Liturgy.
John Carroll Futrell, S.J., M.A., S.T.L., Ph.L., S.T.D., Assistant Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology.
Thomas P. Swift, S.J., S.M., S.T.L., J.C.L., J.C.D., Assistant Professor of Canon Law.

Fr. Van Ackeren also won the approval of the local Archbishop, who was kind enough to send out a letter each semester to all diocesan priests urging their attention to this new program. In addition, letters to the Bishops of the Springfield (Ill.) and Belleville dioceses elicited their approval to mail an announcement to priests in those two dioceses within 50 miles of St. Louis.

Metropolitan College provided administrative service, and the Dean of that College worked closely with Fr. Van Ackeren and faculty members in planning promotion, teaching format, and other organizational details.

The basic format chosen was the weekly non-credit seminar, meeting ten times during the semester, from 2:00 to 3:30 P.M. Typically, each session consisted of some lecture followed by discussion of both the lecture and of assigned readings; registration in each course was limited to 30 to facilitate free discussion. Only Catholic priests were accepted as registrants.

Considerable effort was expended to arrange matters as conveniently as possible for the priests we hoped to serve. Registration-by-mail was encouraged, and coffee was served prior to each class session. The usual perquisites of Metropolitan College non-credit registrants were also offered: use of the Library, campus parking, *etc.*

It is believed that this is the only systematic *class* program for the continuing education of the Catholic priesthood in the United States--although a number of institutions and agencies (including our own Archdiocesan Clergy Conferences Commission) offer special learning experiences to priests, through *conference* programs; many priests, of course, also participate in conferences sponsored by Protestant and Jewish organizations.

Courses Offered

For Autumn, three courses were announced: two in the afternoon, one in the evening. As noted above, the evening course failed. That evening course, plus another, made up

the Spring afternoon curriculum; all four courses succeeded for a success rate of 100%--unusual for a new continuing education activity.

Here are the courses announced; for each, there is given also faculty member, full description, and number of registrations:

Courses--Autumn	*Registration* Aut	Spr
Div 748: INSTITUTIONALISM & CONSCIENCE.		
Fr. Swift.	25	--

How can we assess and deal with the rapidly emerging problems of conscience in laymen, priests, and religious, who find themselves in a critical tension with the institutional Church . . . whether with the hierarchy, the law, the magisterium, the structure, etc.?

This seminar aims to study the shape of this crisis of conscience, as manifested in recent books by Charles Davis and James Kavanaugh. Within that framework, you will--through lecture and discussion--seek greater insight into the relation between conscience and religious institutions; and examine how institutions form conscience, the patterns of crisis which develop, and alternate responses. A good bit of time will be given to the study of freedom within other human institutions, as seen by sociology and psychology, in an effort to work toward a theology of freedom within the human-divine institution which is the Church.

Div 754: LITURGICAL CELEBRATION.		
Fr. Diederich.	10	--

What is the total human faith experience in which the manifold presence of Christ is actuated as the liturgical celebration unfolds? Does the analysis of this faith experience help us to project a more adequate catechesis of the liturgical changes already made? Does it also help us understand the dynamic that is shaping future liturgical reform and making such reform a keenly-felt need?

These questions concern us in this seminar. We shall aim to express as adequately as possible what our liturgical experience is, with special attention to both its *human* and its *faith* dimension. We shall try to formulate this expression from within concrete liturgical forms. Hopefully, this will make us alert and sensitive to all aspects of these forms, especially to the role of the one presiding at the celebration.

Our goal is a *working theology of celebration*, one that gives *theological* grounding for distinguishing good and bad celebrations of the liturgy--i.e., we are seeking solid theological grounding for being concerned as to whether or not liturgical celebrations are *good human experiences*.

Courses--Spring

	Registrations Aut	Spr
Div 745: CURRENT MORAL PROBLEMS.		
Fr. Connery.	--	24

You will review and analyze select moral problems currently under discussion, including: the problem of contraception, including a discussion of *Humanae Vitae* and the Majority Report of the Birth Control Commission; the problem of freedom of conscience; dissent and civil disobedience; the teaching authority of the Church, with an emphasis on the force of non-infallible teaching; new approaches to moral theology, particularly situation ethics; new approaches to responsibility, with emphasis on the so-called fundamental option.

Div 762: MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY.		
Fr. Futrell	3 (cancelled)	20

How does the contemporary American diocesan priest fulfill his role in this modern world? What are the hang-ups?

This seminar aims to find real solutions to real problems posed by participants, from your personal experience as shared in class dialogue. The instructor will act as a resource, sharing the fruits of his research to propose alternate solutions, and will provide support for the personal relationships of the priest-participants.

You will work from the notion of contemporary Christian spirituality, zeroing in on the specific spirituality of the priest as a member of the People of God to whom is given a special role. The goal is to learn more fully how the priest lives his commitment to Christ in all the aspects of his life. Topics to be covered include: approach to God (e.g., life of prayer, both formal and finding God in all things), ecclesial spirituality (e.g., attitudes toward authority and obedience from a spiritual rather than juridical viewpoint, living celibacy), sacramental spirituality (e.g., in the Eucharist), apostolic spirituality, fraternal spirituality (effective love of fellow priests), passive purifications.

(Offered *evenings* the Autumn, afternoons, Spring.)

Registration

Autumn results were, frankly, disappointing: one of three courses failed; a second received only ten registrations, the minimum number required to conduct a class. Still, 30 different priests provided 35 course registrations--meaning that five of the 30 (17%) were interested enough to take both afternoon courses. It was also reassuring that the cancelled course was offered in the evening--against the advice of the Archdiocesan Commission on Clergy Conferences.

Spring registration justified the decision to continue: Eleven men from the Autumn enrolled again, and another 30 men registered--a growth to 41 men and 44 course registrations. The Autumn's cancelled course--MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY--was re-scheduled for the afternoon, and this time attracted 20 registrants.

The 60 individuals were thus responsible for 79 course registrations. Thirteen took two or more courses. The typical pattern was one course each semester (seven men); two men took two courses in the Autumn and only one in the Spring; another two took *both* courses each semester. Thus, 47 men each took a single course; nine took two courses, two took three courses, and two took four courses.

The Spring also offered another re-assurance: At Fr. Van Ackeren's suggestion, two religion courses *for laymen* were also listed on the special leaflet, "Continuing Education for Priests," mailed to clergymen. These courses were:

Hm 736: SYNOPTIC GOSPELS, taught by *Irvin M. Arkin*, B.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology.

Hm 737: EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS, taught by R.F. *Smith*, S.J., S.T.D., Professor of Historical Theology.

Eleven priests and brothers enrolled in these two courses--including four of the men enrolling in "Divinity" courses: two each in SYNOPTIC GOSPELS and in EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS. Three other priests chose GOSPELS; one priest (from the Cathedral) and three brothers from LaSalle Institute, Glencoe, Mo., enrolled for ST. PAUL.

If these registrations in laymen's courses are included, the figures given above change so:

	Autumn	Spring
Number of Men	30	48
Number of Registrations	35	55

Note, too, that both laymen's courses were on the *Bible*--which in turn suggests an interest in this subject by local diocesan clergy that might well be served by "Divinity" offerings in the future.

The Registrants

The most interesting and important part of any teaching-learning experience, of course, is: the *learners*. Herewith is an analysis of data from the 60 priests' Enrolment Forms--and while somewhat sketchy in human terms, it offers useful data for future planning.

For convenience, all tables appear at the end.

Age. Ages were distributed somewhat evenly over a wide age-range--from 27 to 64 years of age. Median age was 45 years; mean age was 43.3 years. When arranged by age-decades (*see* Table I), the distribution was somewhat less even; about a third of the men were between 40 and 49. This is somewhat older than other continuing education acitvity (*e.g.*, other samplings of Metropolitan College registrants have shown the heaviest concentration in the 30-39 age decade). In the case of this group of priests, twelve (20%) were between 30 and 39, and the same number between 50 and 59.

Table I also indicates *no* correlation between *age* and *number of courses taken*. In every age-decade, about a third of the men took two or more courses.

Status. The overwhelming majority (73%) of registrants were parish priests, the group for whom the program was intended. Twenty-two were pastors, and another 22, associate pastors. The remaining sixteen held other kinds of positions, including: Rector, Springfield (Ill.) Diocesan Seminary; the Prior of Augustinian Academy; the St. Louis Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools; two priests from Kenrick Seminary; the Rector and two teachers from Maryknoll Junior Seminary; Director of Catholic Charities in this Archdiocese; one priest from Cincinnati currently working on a degree in Social Service; Catholic Chaplain of the Jefferson Barracks VA Hospital; a counsellor from St. Bonaventure Seminary.

No strong correlation appears between status and number of courses taken (see Table II)--except that pastors were somewhat more likely to enrol in two or more courses.

Location. As might be expected from the distribution of population, the bulk of registrants were from parishes and other institutions within St. Louis City and County. However, a third of the men drove some distance every week to attend class. On the Missouri side, registrants drove from Farmington, Arnold, Affton, Chesterfield, Bonne Terre, O'Fallon, St. Charles, Desloges, Benton, New Melle, and Warrenton.

Six men were from Illinois--including the Rector of the Springfield (Ill.) Diocesan Seminary. The other five (four pastors--two of whom took three courses each--and one associate pastor) are from Belleville, Dupo, Lebanon, Waterloo, and East St. Louis.

A few concentrations from parishes and one institution stand out. The rector and two teachers from Maryknoll Junior Seminary enrolled, each in one course. The pastor and two associate pastors from St. Roch's enrolled--the pastor in two courses, one associate in *four* courses, the other associate in one course. Both the pastor and associate pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help enrolled, each for a single course in the Autumn.

Course Choice. Analysis of ages and status in individual courses showed no meaningful differences. Div 762: MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY attracted a group slightly younger than the other courses, and slightly smaller proportion of pastors (as compared with associate pastors, teachers, *et al.*)--but the differences seem too small to be significant. (See Table III).

Multiple Registrations. Of the 60 individuals, thirteen took two or more courses. The typical pattern was one course each semester (seven men); two men took two courses in the Autumn and only one in the Spring; another two took both courses offered each semester. Thus, 47 men each took a single course; 9 took two courses, two took three courses, and two took four courses.

Including registrations in the laymen's religion courses raises the total number of men to 67, of whom . . . .

53 took a single course
8 took two courses
4 took three courses
1 took four courses
1 took five courses

The thirteen who took two or more "Divinity" courses differed in only one respect from the total population: six of the thirteen (46%) were pastors, whereas of the total group, only 37% (22 of 60) were pastors. Age-wise, the multiple-registrants differed little from the whole group: Median age, 45 years, the same as for the total group; mean age, 44.7 years, slightly higher than the 43.3 years of the whole group; range, from 30 to 60 years, slightly smaller than the 27 to 64 years in the whole group.

This suggests that pastors, despite their heavy burdens, are more interested in continuing education than priests holding other kind of diocesan responsibilities.

One interesting correlation did appear among the men who enrolled in two or more courses. One course-combination stood out strongly: INSTITUTIONALISM AND CONSCIENCE and MODERN PRIESTLY SPIRITUALITY. Of the 19 two-course combinations that appeared, *nine* were for this particular combination; the next highest frequency was *five* for the combination, INSTITUTIONALISM AND CONSCIENCE and LITURGICAL CELEBRATION, both offered in the Autumn. Given the subject-content of the high-frequency combination--currently controversial matters within the Catholic Church, and indeed in all Christendom--this finding suggests that the program is reaching a group of highly-interested priests who feel a need for an intellectual dimension in their personal and priestly growth.

It may also be significant that the second-highest combination included (a) LITURGICAL CELEBRATION, the least-popular of the four courses, and (b) the two *Autumn* courses. This suggests that the local clergy were eager for the Divinity School's offering and, at the first opportunity, enrolled for whatever was offered--including one course that in fact interested half or fewer of the number of men who enrolled in any other course.

Two facts are worth noting about the nine men who chose the high-frequency course combination: (1) All nine were parish clergy; *none* were teachers, diocesan officials, etc. (2) Pastors predominated; two-thirds (six) were pastors, and only three, associate pastors--offering further confirmation for the remark above about the high interest of pastors. With respect to age, these nine men showed little or no difference from the total group, or from the group of multiple-registrants: Median age, 45 years; mean age, 46.4 years, slightly older than other multiple registrants and than the total group; age range, 30 to 60 years.

Conclusions

Overall, this first year's effort in continuing education for priests must be considered a success. Thirty men began in the Autumn, and over a third returned for a second semester, to be joined by 30 new men. The most interesting courses from an *intellectual* viewpoint turned out to be the most popular, thus suggesting strongly that local priests have an image of the University's School of Divinity as an intellectual resource in the fulfillment of their religious functions. Over 18% of the registrants took two or more courses, which compares well with continuing education activities for other professional groups. Registrants came from considerable distances to attend these classes; indeed, of the two men who enrolled for all four courses offered, one drove weekly all the way from Benton, Mo., spending each Monday night on campus in his home-made trailer. (He was also one of the four priests who enrolled in one of the laymen's courses in the Spring)

In short, on the basis of this limited analysis, it appears that the School of Divinity has laid the foundation for a successful continuing education program. Future

possibilities for exploration include: additional subject offerings, conferences of 2 to 5 days to serve priests from the entire Mid-West, courses (either classes or conferences) for clergymen of all faiths.

TABLE I

AGE AND NUMBER OF COURSES

Age decades	Number of courses 1	2	3	4	Totals
20-29	4	1	-	-	5
30-39	8	3	-	1	12
40-49	18	2	2	-	22
50-59	9	2	-	1	12
60-69	2	1	-	-	3
AGE NOT GIVEN	6				6
TOTALS	47	9	2	2	60

TABLE II

STATUS AND NUMBER OF COURSES TAKEN

Status	Number of Courses 1	2	3	4	Totals
Pastor	16	3	2	1	22
Associate Pastor	17	4	-	1	22
Other	14	2	-	-	16
TOTALS	47	9	2	2	60

TABLE III

AGE AND STATUS OF REGISTRANTS IN EACH COURSE

Other Characteristics	Courses			
	Div 745	Div 748	Div 754	Div 762
Age Decades				
20-29	-	4	1	-
30-39	6	4	2	6
40-49	14	7	4	5
50-59	2	8	3	3
60-69	1	2	-	1
Age not given	1	-	-	5
	24	25	10	20
Median Age	43.0	46.0	46.0	42.0
Mean Age	43.3	44.9	43.8	42.7
Age Range	30-64	27-63	27-54	30-60
Status:				
Pastors	12	10	4	8
Associate Pastors	8	8	4	6
Others	4	7	2	6

TABLE IV

STATUS OF MEN WHO TOOK TWO OR MORE COURSES

Status	Number of courses 2	3	4	TOTALS
Pastors	3	2	1	6
Associate Pastors	4	-	1	5
Others	2			2
TOTALS	9	2	2	13

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